1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

769 are buried quickly and crudely in unvisited and unremembered tombs; only in very rare cases are sacrifices offered to them; and there are no sacred places associated with them.

[181] Thus Nuer have always felt themselves free to wander as they
613 pleased, and if a man is unhappy, his family sick, his herds de-
593 clining, his garden exhausted, his relations with some of his neighbours uncongenial, or merely if he is restless, he moves to a different part of the country and resides with some kinsmen.
• 607 It is seldom that a man goes alone, for brothers are a corporate
601 group and, especially if they are sons of one mother, stick together. So, frequently as a result of quarrels, a group of brothers will often leave a village and settle elsewhere. Nuer say that they usually make for the home of a married sister, where they are certain to be well received. Here they are respected as *ficiengthu*, in-laws, and their children accepted as *gaat wär*, children of the mother's brother, while the people they join are to them *cieng cowimar*, the people of my sister's husband, and *gaat nyal*, children of a female agnate, and *gaat waca*, children of the father's sister. A man who changes his residence thus becomes a member of a different community and enters into intimate relations with the dominant lineage of that community. When a GAATIEK man said to me, 'Now that I have come to settle in *Cieng* Kwoth I am a man of *Cieng* Kwoth', he meant that outside ceremonial situations he identified himself with the KWOTH lineage rather than with his own.

613 Even one man is a potential lineage and several brothers even
621 more so. A minimal, and then a minor, lineage comes into being which has only ritual status towards the other lineages of its clan, whereas with the people in whose village and district its members have grown up it has a mutuality of interests and a community of experience. The group thus develops into a distinct lineage. It intermarries with the other people of its home and very often it intermarries so frequently with the dominant lineage of the district that further marriage between them becomes impossible without breaking incest regulations. In this way lineages twine around one another and a texture of cognatic relationships unites all members of the community. Only a few such lineages establish themselves and survive as lineages. Many either die out or lose much of their individuality

2;Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

claim part of it, for those who can claim part of a girl's bride-wealth are kin to her. Nuer state these rules in terms of cattle.

A man may not take his wife's sister or any near kinswoman of his wife as a second wife. A man may be on familiar terms with his wife's sister, but sexual relations with her are incestuous and it is only permissible for him to marry her if his wife has died without having borne children. When I argued that there was no kinship between a man and his wife's sister, Nuer said that this was not true. 'What about the child?' they asked. They regard a man and his wife's sister as related through the child of the wife—for a woman is only fully married when she has a child and comes to live with her husband's people as their 'kinswoman', as they say, since her child is their child. Her sister is therefore also a kind of kinswoman, seeing that she is also the mother of their child. Your wife's sister being your child's maternal aunt is your sister (as we say, sister-in-law). Nuer also define this relationship in terms of cattle. When your daughter is married her mother's sister receives a cow of her bridewealth, and Nuer hold that she cannot both receive this cow and be your wife at the same time, especially as the cow is in some degree regarded as part of the bridewealth still owing from your marriage to your wife. Also, when your wife's sister's daughter marries, your wife will receive a cow and Nuer feel that there is something wrong about this cow coming to her if her sister is also her co-wife. In certain circumstances a woman may claim cattle on her sister's marriage, and in this case the man who pays the cattle would also be the receiver of them were a man to marry his wife's sister—a situation the Nuer regard as impossible. Hence Nuer say that a man may not marry his wife's sister either 'on account of her (the wife's) children' or 'on account of the cattle', which are different ways of saying that he cannot marry his child's maternal aunt. There is a further reason which would prevent a man from marrying his wife's sister while his wife is living, for, as will be explained later, a man may not have sexual relations with two closely related women at the same time. It follows that two brothers ought not to marry sisters or close cousins: 'That would be bad because if your brother died you could not take his wife.'

A man may not marry the daughter of an age-mate, a member of his age-set, 'because she is his daughter'. The blood age-mates have shed together into the ground at their initiation gives them a

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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break down as patterns of affinity change into patterns of kinship, the husband becoming 'the father of our daughter's children' instead of 'our daughter's husband'. A man may even joke with his mother-in-law when there are several children.

The rules about eating and nakedness apply, though in a lesser degree, to kinsfolk of the wife of her parents' generation as well as to the parents themselves, for all her kinsfolk are her husband's in-laws. A man will not appear naked or eat in the homes of his wife's paternal and maternal uncles and aunts or appear naked before the wives of his wife's close kinsmen. I have seen a man's wife's paternal aunt make a great fuss when unintentionally he appeared naked before her. He knelt behind another man to hide his nakedness and receive her reproaches when he became aware of his misdemeanour. On another occasion the fuss was made by a bride's paternal uncle's wife while the astonished bridegroom hastily retired into a hut. Unintentional affronts of this kind are quieted by small payments, such as a spear or a goat. As the genealogical distance from the wife increases, the obligation on the part of her husband to observe these rules lessens. It altogether ceases when the wife's father and maternal uncle have paid beasts to enable him to eat in their homes. Should a divorce take place, the son-in-law at once ceases to treat his in-laws with respect.

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The wife's brother and her other kinsmen of his generation are not avoided, but her eldest brother may refrain from eating with the bridegroom before a child has been born. Nuer say, 'the wife's brother is your brother; since he gave you his sister he became your brother', and 'the husband of your sister is your brother because he will get a cow (the *yang waca*) on the marriage of your daughter'. After the birth of children a man and his wife's brother can, if great friends, jokingly curse one another in obscene language. The wife's brother's wife is highly respected till a child has been born, though not to the same extent as the mother-in-law, unless the mother-in-law is dead; then 'she becomes your mother-in-law and must be respected as deeply as a mother-in-law'. Nuer say that she then becomes your real mother-in-law and that '*ca mandong*', 'she has become a grandmother' (to the children of her husband's sister, who call their maternal uncle's wife 'grandmother'). The only in-law whom a man need not at any time treat with reserve is his wife's sister. He can joke with her and even exchange abusive language with her. However, if his mother-in-law

607 is dead he treats her eldest daughter with reserve, for she has then taken her mother's place: 'she has placed the food on the fire' (at her mother's mortuary ceremony). A man and his wife's sister's husband, whom he calls *warombaida*, may be on intimate terms.

602 It is only when the bride is still a maiden that the father and uncles and brothers of the bridegroom are reserved with his parents-in-law. After the marriage is consummated only the husband's father or, if the father is dead, his eldest brother will respect his parents-in-law and only to a small extent, not usually with regard to nakedness and food. Nevertheless, it is customary for the father of the bridegroom to give the father of the bride a spear or goat, and for the father of the bride to make him a similar gift, to enable the two men to eat in one another's homes without shame. A husband's younger brothers do not in any way respect his in-laws and they eat and go naked in their homesteads. On the other hand, it is customary, at any rate in the Lou tribal area, for the youth who acted as the husband's best man in the marriage ceremonies to respect his in-laws till they give him a goat to break down his reserve.

606 Obviously a wife is in a different position *vis-à-vis* her husband's people from that of a husband *vis-à-vis* his wife's people. Nevertheless, while avoidance is impracticable, she treats her parents-in-law with great respect, and in the early days of her marriage she keeps herself apart from them as much as domestic requirements permit. She cannot eat with her mother-in-law, and this prohibition may continue for some years after the birth of her first child. She cannot eat in her husband's home at all before the birth of her first child, and even after this event, when she has come to live with him, she ought not to see him eat or be seen eating by him. However, the inconvenience of this prohibition is evident, and soon after she has taken up residence in her husband's home it will be arranged that her husband enters as though by accident a hut in which she is eating. After this it is no longer shameful for husband and wife to see one another eating, and though the wife is at first shy, she will eventually share her husband's meal when

607 they are alone. Before the birth of her first child a woman respects her husband's sisters and will not eat out of the same dish with them. After the birth of a child she can be on free and easy terms with them, though personal difficulties sometimes make for reserve. Should the mother be dead, her eldest daughter tends to

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
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take her place in the family, and this affects her relationship to her brother's wife.

Just as a husband need not respect his wife's sisters but is on familiar terms with them, so a wife is on familiar terms with her husband's brothers. Among brothers the wife of one is in a general social sense the wife of all. A man seldom refers to his brother's wife as '*ciekdemar*', 'the wife of my brother', but as '*ciekgoala*', 'the wife of my home', and she refers to him as '*guangaanko*', 'the father of our children.' Another word a wife uses to refer to her husband's brothers (mostly for his younger brothers), and also for his paternal cousins, is '*cocangda*', which seems to mean 'my husband of the daytime' as distinct from the husband of the night, the real husband, for Nuer say that '*cowar gule, cowar gule*', 'the husband of the outside is different, the husband of the night is different'.* Here again, though relations between a wife and her husband's brothers are free and easy, should her father-in-law be dead the eldest brother takes his place as head of the family and must be treated with deference. When she has borne several children she and her husband's brothers and paternal cousins may curse each other in foul language. In the horseplay which takes place on the day boys are initiated and on the day initiates pass out of seclusion it is the *cocangda*, generally a paternal cousin of the husband, who lifts up the skirt of the mother of an initiate and spits and utters a cry.

A woman enters her husband's home as a wife of the home. She also enters it as the mother of a child of her husband's lineage, and this is emphasized by the usual teknonymous mode of address for a married woman in her husband's community—mother of so-and-so, after the name of her eldest child, the link which joins her to her husband's lineage—in contrast to the patronymic mode of address for the husband—son of so-and-so, after the name of his father, his link with his lineage. Through the child she has kinship with the people of the home of her adoption by marriage. '*Jigoala*', 'people of my home', a woman's favourite ejaculation, is the term by which she refers collectively to the domestic society of which she regards herself as a member. The expression was constantly on her lips before marriage in reference to her paternal family and kin. When she comes to live with her husband it is still constantly

* However, Father Kiggen (*Nuer-English Dictionary*, 1948, p. 63) gives *cowang*, a formation which would not bear the same literal meaning as *cocang*.

7. Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931-1936) 1949 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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A man may not take his wife's sister or any near kinswoman of his wife as a second wife. A man may be on familiar terms with his wife's sister but sexual relations with her are incestuous and it is only permissible for him to marry her if his wife has died without having borne children.[1] It is said that were he to do so the children of the marriage would die. When I argued that there was no kinship between a man and his wife's sister Nuer said that this was not true. 'What about the child?' they asked. They regard a man and his wife's sister as related through the child of the wife—for a woman is only fully married when she has a child and comes to live with her husband's people as their 'kinswoman', as they say, since her child is their child. Her sister is therefore also a kind of kinswoman since she is also the mother of their child. Your wife's sister being your child's maternal aunt is your sister (as we say, sister-in-law). Nuer also define this relationship in terms of cattle. When your daughter is married her mother's sister receives a cow of her bridewealth, and Nuer hold that she cannot both receive this cow and be your wife at the same time, especially as the cow is regarded as part of the bridewealth still owing from your marriage to your wife. Also, when your wife's sister's daughter marries, your wife will receive a cow, and Nuer feel that there is something wrong about this cow coming to her if her sister is also her co-wife. In certain circumstances a woman may claim cattle on her sister's marriage, and in this case the man who pays the cattle would also be the receiver of them were a man to marry his wife's sister—a situation the Nuer regard as impossible. Hence Nuer say that a man may not marry his wife's sister either 'on account of her (the wife's) children' or 'on account of the cattle', which are different ways of saying that you cannot marry your child's maternal aunt. There is a further reason which would prevent a man from marrying his wife's sister while his wife is living, for, as will be explained later, a man may not have sexual relations with two closely related women at the same time. It follows that two brothers ought not to marry sisters or close cousins: 'That would be bad because if your brother died you could not take his wife.'

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A man may not marry the daughter of an age-mate, a member

[1] A single case of marriage to two sisters at the same time was recorded. A well-known magician on the Sobat river defied the prohibition. When, however, one of his daughters fell sick with syphilis, or yaws, he gave up the second sister.

II;Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1945
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Nyawang ♀—Kang ♂ who is also dead. She bore him Tang ♂ and Gai ♂. Lately he has married Nyarieh ♀—Cang ♂ by whom he has an unweaned child. He has an unmarried concubine who was temporarily absent during my visit. She has borne him two sons, Twang ♂ and Kang ♂. Cattle have been paid to legitimatize Twang ♂ and more cattle will be paid to legitimatize Kang ♂.

Kerbiel's brother, Panyuan, lives in his byre, and his sister's sons, Nhial ♂—Raiwen ♂ and Goluak ♂—Raiwen ♂, spend most of their time there and house some of their cattle there.

Homestead No. X. Mear ♂—Col ♂. He is unmarried. In his byre lives his half-brother, Wec ♂—Jany ♂, who has married a wife to the name of one of his father's brothers. She has borne him Kerwai ♂ (dead), Nhial ♂, Nyajuenni ♀, and Nyaguot ♀. As he has no cattle, he has sold his byre to Col ♀ of Homestead No. II, and as he is too lazy to cultivate a garden, his wife and family, to save themselves from starvation, live at her sister's home in another village. He wanders hither and thither and scrounges on other people. Another occupant of this byre is Mear's sister's son, Biliew ♂—Lam ♂.

Homestead No. XI. Jal ♂—Ngunjuk (brother of Col of homestead No. II). The two brothers live at a distance because their wives do not get on well together. His brother, Bol ♂, and his half-brother, Pan ♂, share his byre. Both are unmarried. Jal ♂ has married a wife to the name of his father's brother, Mawng ♂—Ret ♂. This woman, Nyalueh ♀—Deng ♂ has bore him: Cuong ♂ and Nyalin ♀. One of the huts in this homestead belonged to Jal's mother who died last year. See Diagram No. VII.

Homestead No. XII. Nyawal ♀—Col ♂. Her husband was Lam ♂ of the Ngwai clan. She bore him Rwac ♂ (dead) and Nyakwoli ♀. After his death she cohabited with Juan ♂ of the Jikal clan, by whom she bore Biliew ♂, Nyakuan ♀, Nyalieth ♀, Gluth ♂, Bathu ♀, and Nyalita ♀. She is past child-bearing and does not cohabit with any man. Her cattle are housed in the byre of her brother Mear ♂, of Homestead No. X.

Homestead No. XIII. Nyading ♀—Kuleng ♂. Her daughter, Nyamani ♀, was married by Tang ♂—Kerbiel ♂ to the name of Ran ♂, a brother of his father (though begotten by Kwowar while Kerbiel ♂ was begotten by Jany ♂). Ran ♂ had died before initiation and his ghost began to kill Kerbiel's wives and children and had to be quieted by being married a wife. Nyamani ♀ lives with her mother, Nyading ♀, whose husband, Dak ♂—Jiang ♂, is dead. She bore Dak ♂ three children: Nyamani ♀, Nyaghok ♀, and Col ♂. Dak ♂ by another wife begat Nyajuenni ♀ who also lives in this homestead. Nyajuenni ♀ was married by Puthiel ♂—Nyaliker ♂ of the Lual section and bore him a blind son who also lives here. She refused to live with her husband's brother when he died, so the cattle of her bride-wealth were returned. She was then married to another man and divorced by him. She now cohabits with Mokwai ♂ of Homestead No. XVI and has borne him a son.

Homestead No. XIV. Lat ♂—Jany ♂. He married a wife, Cau ♀—Giling ♂ of the Reng section of the Jikany tribe, to the name of his dead

15: Butt E-4 (No date) 1952 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

cattle has been handed over.(1) A marriage which has reached the final rites may be regarded as a stable union. 524

The first step occurs when a youth reaches an understanding with a girl and, having some of the necessary cattle, asks her consent to marriage. Both families are consulted and arrangements are made for the betrothal (lawiang).

When a definite agreement has been reached about bridewealth cattle, the wedding ceremony (tiet) is held at the bride's homestead. The main features of a wedding are: discussions about cattle, which are held in the morning; the invocation over the cattle of the bridewealth, followed by the wedding dance and the wedding sacrifice in the afternoon and evening. Though this ceremony does not conclude the marriage there is every chance, once this point is reached, that the union will be completed. 535

The third of the public ceremonies is the one which, at least among the Eastern Nuer, makes the union legally binding. This is the nat (consummation). After it the husband can claim compensation for adultery and the cattle are regarded as marriage cattle and not as a pledge.

Marriage is completed by the birth of a child. Until then the wife sleeps in a hut at her parents' homestead and she remains with her parents until the child is weaned. The first-born child belongs to the home of his maternal grandparents and even if he is weaned in his father's home he returns to live with them. A boy stays with his maternal grandparents until he is initiated, a girl until she is betrothed. The baby is always brought to the father's home for the ceremony of laying him on the ashes of the hearth in the centre of his grandfather's byre, which takes place shortly after birth. 591 603 852

After the wedding, the husband builds his wife a hut in his father's homestead. She goes to live with him as a true wife in that she will now milk his cows and her children and not those of her father. She makes a fire, a cool fire screen, and the spirit of his lineage comes to dwell there. Later his father tells him to build a byre and gives him a few cows to start a herd.(1) 591

In-Law Relationships

In-law relationships are marked by certain avoidances and displays of respect. Until his first child is born a husband does not openly visit his parents-in-law's village except in some formal capacity. After the birth he makes public visits, but he treats his parents-in-law with great respect and must not eat with them or appear naked before them. When two of these children have been born, a ceremony takes place after which he no longer has to observe these rules and prohibitions. When the father-in-law visits the husband's home and is entertained and given a bull, calf or sheep, his son-in-law may regard him as a father. The only in-law whom a man must not treat with formal respect is his wife's sister. 606 607

(1) [illegible]
(2) [illegible]

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For a man's wife, avoidance is impracticable, but she treats her parents-in-law with great respect and, in the early days of marriage, keeps herself apart from them as much as possible. She is on joking terms with her husband's brothers since, among brothers, the wife of one is, in the social sense, the wife of all.(1)

DIVORCE

586

If a wife dies childless or if her husband divorces her the bride-wealth cattle have to be returned. If a child has been born and is left with the husband then the cattle are returned, minus six. If two children have been born, no cattle are returned. Divorce is recognized as having taken place only if cattle are returned; if a wife leaves her husband to live with another man, and her husband does not claim return of the bridewealth, any children she may bear are his. Divorce after the birth of a child is very unusual, and after the birth of a second child, almost unknown.

RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

TOTEMISM

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The various Nuer lineages have specific ritual attitudes towards certain natural objects and living creatures. They respect the lion, reptiles, birds and plants; some lineages respect rivers and streams but, for all Nuer, rivers are especially associated with the mother spirit, Nyadeng, who is held in reverence by all the people. Some lineages respect cattle with certain markings and therefore do not keep them. The largest clan in Nuerland - the Gaetgaakiir of the Jikany tribes - respect gourds, since, it is said, the ancestor of the clan was found in a gourd. In general, however, totems are associated with lineages rather than with clans.

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Nuer totems (*kwoth*) are neither peculiar nor particularly important, and the Nuer themselves state that the majority of the totems come from the Dinka; they further maintain that the *kuth* of Nuer lineages are sky spirits, or spirits of persons who have been killed by lightning and have become sky spirits. The totemic relationship is explained in the myths which tell how ancestors of the lineages and the members of the species related to the lineages, were born twins. A man respects his wife's totems and a woman her husband's, while children respect their mother's totems generally. A totemic relationship of the same type does not prevent marriage.

Respect for a totem consists in refraining from hurting it or eating it; in paying it some recognition and consideration, and in making an expression of regret should it be found dead. In turn the totemic species is expected not to cause any harm to those who respect it. Sacrifices and prayers are made to the totem and cattle are dedicated to it. The species itself is not worshipped although the representatives are

(1) Evans-Pritchard, Am. 1940, No.2, p.5.